connecting REDMOND

Transportation Framework Policies Evaluation
CITY OF REDMOND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The City is updating its Comprehensive Plan to prepare for future growth and change. The updated plan will shape Redmond's future, just as plans adopted in the 1970's have been responsible for transforming Redmond from an agricultural community to a major employment center while preserving environmental features and open space.

As part of the update process, Redmond is developing a Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The TMP will provide a comprehensive and integrated blueprint for improvement and management of the City's transportation system to the year 2020. The TMP process has already resulted in a focused action plan for improvements to circulation and access in Downtown Redmond, entitled "City Center Redmond." Work on the TMP this year continues with an update of the City's vision and policies for transportation.

This Evaluation provides an assessment of the transportation policy element of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan. It further identifies transportation policy themes emerging from current issues and public discussions, and proposes potential new directions for the City as it updates the policy framework portion of its Comprehensive Plan.

This document is organized into four sections:

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT TRANSPORTATION CHAPTER

The transportation element (chapter) of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan contains 16 sections (A through P), beginning with a foundation established in the "framework policies" in section A. These are summarized below.

A. Framework Policies summarize the vision for the transportation system and establish fundamental objectives to guide development of that system.

B. Travel Demand Forecasts Section provides a summary of forecasted growth in Redmond.

C. Transportation and Land Use Policies are designed to link land use and transportation objectives**.**

D. District Management Policies establish Transportation Management Districts throughout the City to identify the mobility needs and strategies for individual areas within Redmond.

E. Service Standards and Concurrency Policies address development of transportation service standards.

F. Transportation Facility Plan Policies call for identifying and implementing a long-range Transportation Facility Plan.

G. Transportation Finance Plan Policies describe how the Transportation Facility Plan will be funded.

H. Regional Public Transportation Policies address how Redmond fits into the regional transportation strategy for the Puget Sound area.

I. Local Public Transportation Policies call for developing and maintaining a Transit Development Plan that outlines the transit services and facilities needed to support the City's land use plan and mobility objectives.

J. Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Policies call for developing safe, attractive and efficient bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems.

K. Transportation Demand Management Policies call for implementation of TDM techniques to address transportation problems.

L. Parking Management Policies address strategies involving parking supply and price as a way to create an environment more conducive to transit usage.

M. Circulation System Management Policies guide development of future projects for City streets.

N. Air Quality Policies address relationships between travel and air quality.

O. Neighborhood Protection Policies strive to protect the City's neighborhoods from traffic impacts.

P. Regional Coordination Policies call for interjurisdictional coordination with other cities and entities within the region to ensure consistency of transportation policies.

EMERGING POLICY THEMES

A major emphasis of the update to Redmond's transportation element is ensuring that the plan's vision, policies and implementation strategies are consistent, aligned and clear … and relevant to current issues, opportunities and values. This section summarizes twelve emerging policy themes.

These themes were derived from a combination of sources, including citizen input received at Redmond Design Day (June 2003), a review of the outcome of the Downtown transportation plan completed last year, staff discussions, and review of Planning Commission recommendations to Council on a recommended growth strategy. Other themes emerged from an ongoing assessment by staff, with consulting support, of the practical implications of trends occurring in and around Redmond.

Finally, the themes are drawn in part from continuing discussions among the Mayor and City Council members on key local and regional transportation issues and opportunities facing Redmond.

Most of what is in the current Comprehensive Plan transportation element remains valid and would not require major revision. However, some sections may not fully capture the current vision for Redmond's future. The themes identified below begin the process of identifying those policy areas where changes or additions to the transportation element may be warranted.

1. **Maintaining Character While Absorbing Growth**
2. **Regional Strategies, Regional Connections**
3. **Through Traffic**
4. **Active Living By Design**
5. **Neighborhood Traffic Mitigation**
6. **Gridded, Connected Street Networks**
7. **Community-Based Transit**
8. **Multimodal Streets**
9. **Land Use Interface**
10. **Real Mobility Choices**
11. **Motor Freight Access and Circulation**
12. **Continued Progress on Downtown Improvements**

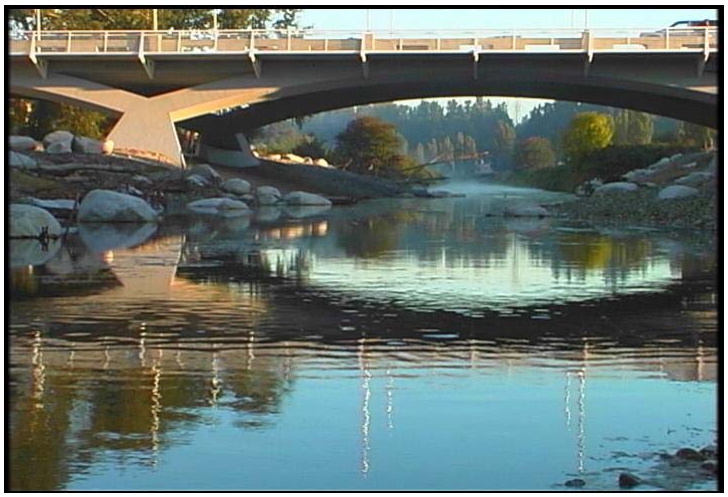
Each of these themes, expressed as policy direction in the comprehensive plan, would guide the City's approach to all of the travel modes: personal vehicles, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian. Thus, policy themes that are accepted to become the basis for policy direction in the updated comprehensive plan would ultimately be reflected in each of the modal system plans of the Transportation Master Plan (to be completed in 2004).

On the following pages, the underlying issue or opportunity for each potential theme is briefly described along with an overview of current conditions and a discussion of the type of policy direction needed if Redmond chooses to implement them through its comprehensive plan update.

THEME: MAINTAINING CHARACTER WHILE ABSORBING GROWTH

Issue or Opportunity
As Redmond grows, and as growth occurs in the areas surrounding Redmond, the City will change. In the face of these trends, how can Redmond retain the key features of its character that make it special? Can Redmond be a bigger place, yet still keep the values that have made it attractive as a place to live?

What key characteristics of Redmond's unique local character are relevant in a discussion about transportation, and what policies would help preserve that character?



At Redmond Design Day, it was clear that some of the essential local characteristics that people value could be summarized by describing Redmond as a "green city" – a place defined by its trees, clean air, clean water, and abundant wildlife. People see Redmond as an "attractive city" and contrast it with the urban "hardscape" feel of its sister cities, especially Seattle and Bellevue.

Because of Redmond's unique geographic situation, remarkable and expansive vistas of trees are framed in every direction by heavily wooded hills and ridges. From certain vantage points on clear days, the Cascades guard the eastern horizon and Mount Rainier can be seen to the south. Tall buildings and wide stretches of pavement would seem to detract from this character. Seldom does this city look "urban" with the possible exception of the Overlake area.

Another value expressed frequently as a desirable feature of the community character of Redmond is its "small town feel." Again, this appears to be in contrast to the urban character of other cities in the region. Freeways, large parking lots, and heavy traffic are some of the transportation elements that might conflict with this value.

Current Conditions
Redmond still retains the features that people value most – a green landscape with lots of trees, coupled with a small town feel. The most significant change noticeably affecting character is the overall increase in the amount of daily traffic on the City's roads and streets, especially during peak hours.

Policy Direction
Establishing clear policy direction on this theme would begin with a short list of key character features that are to be supported through, or protected from, transportation programs and projects.

Such key features include:

- Redmond is a ***green city*** with abundant trees and vegetation, viable wildlife and wildlife habitat, clean water, and vistas of forest and open space.

- Redmond retains a ***small town*** feel, with a downtown that appeals to, and is easily accessible to, residents and visitors alike.

- Redmond is a ***connected place***, both physically and socially, with direct connections among neighborhoods, and between neighborhoods and commercial/employment areas.

- Redmond is a ***diverse place*** with a cross section of employment and housing opportunities appealing to, and available to, a variety of people.

Supporting and protecting these features will require the City to at least pursue the four policy directions described below.

1. *Avoid wide streets and massive intersections.* Multilane streets and wide intersections impart a suburban highway feel to the surrounding areas, increasing the ratio of paved (hardscape) surface to unpaved (green) surface. They discourage walking and attract larger volumes of traffic, dividing and isolating commercial areas.

Given ongoing regional traffic growth, over which Redmond has no control, this policy direction implies a combination of:
- reducing traffic growth through demand management and mode shift;
- deterring pass-through traffic with strategic roadway planning; and,
- accepting higher levels of congestion on certain arterial corridors.

2. *Manage vehicle speeds.* Use a combination of street design, public awareness campaigns and enforcement to manage vehicle speeds. Traffic speeds over 25 mph significantly increase accident severity for pedestrians. Traffic speeds over 35 mph increase traffic noise, discourage walking and bicycling, and force changes in abutting land uses. High speed streets are barriers to short trips (all modes), reducing the internal connectedness of affected areas.

3. *Implement "green streets."* Avoid cutting of mature trees to provide space for road widening or extensions. Build green streets with generous landscaping and viable street trees. Require developers to install trees and landscaping on new local streets and in large commercial parking lots.

4. *Develop a complete sidewalk and crosswalk network in commercial areas, including downtown.* Pedestrians are a defining characteristic of "small town" places, and the presence of pedestrians is the only reliable indicator of a "pedestrian-oriented" environment. Pedestrians will not appear in places with discontinuities in the sidewalk grid and dangerous street crossings. Pedestrian-tolerant settings are supportive of mixed use development, which in turn supports economic and residential diversity.

Question for Discussion (1)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect greater emphasis on maintaining community character while absorbing growth?

THEME: REGIONAL STRATEGIES, REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

Issue or Opportunity

Many of the transportation policies, programs and projects (and associated funding) of greatest importance to Redmond fall wholly or partly within the authority of state and regional agencies (Washington State DOT, Sound Transit, King County Metro Transit, etc.). Other key decisions are made by abutting jurisdictions (Bellevue, King County, etc.).

Redmond cannot achieve its transportation and community development objectives solely by acting unilaterally. It must also influence and leverage the actions and decisions made by others.

Because Redmond is one city in a complex regional metropolitan area, the mobility of its citizens (residents and workers) depends on seamless regional connections – in all modes.

However, regional connections rely most importantly on transit (public and private) and personal motor vehicle travel (including vanpools) – the longer distance modes.

Redmond has in the past worked closely with Eastside cities and other jurisdictions to ensure good regional connections. This will be an important challenge in the transit mode as Sound Transit continues to plan, operate and expand regional express bus and high capacity transit service, and as roadway projects are planned and compete for regional funding priority.

Current Conditions

Redmond has active, functional relationships with the state, with regional agencies, and with its abutting jurisdictions. Examples include Redmond's support in the Trans-Lake Washington Study for incorporating future High Capacity Transit on the new SR-520 Bridge, support through the I-405 Corridor Program to address key congestion points on I-405, and work to improve regional, inter- and intra-community transit service provided by Sound Transit and King County Metro Transit.

Ongoing inter-jurisdictional work includes identifying and building arterial street improvements through cooperative work with the City of Bellevue, and analyzing needed transit priority treatments with the City of Kirkland and Sound Transit through the NE 85th Street Corridor Study. Current partnerships with private sector companies in travel reduction programs are also critically important.

Policy Direction
To be effective in interlocal and regional arenas, Redmond must first have a clear, unambiguous idea of its own objectives and plans. To strengthen the City's posture on important regional policy choices, Redmond should adopt specific preferences as policies in its comprehensive plan.

Specific questions Redmond should be prepared to address include:

1. *Regional express transit (Sound Transit Phase I).* What would be Redmond's preferred use of funds from program extension or other scenarios creating unanticipated revenues? What priorities would the City have for monies originally allocated to the Willows Road corridor? What improvements in existing regional bus routes would benefit Redmond, and how could these improvements be made?

2. *Fixed guideway, high capacity transit (Sound Transit Phase II).* What is Redmond's position on potential extension of fixed guideway transit to the East Side? Which corridors into Redmond (and what termini) are consistent with the City's objectives? What process should the City initiate to involve the public in this?

3. *Local transit route structure and service levels (King County Metro).* What improvements in local service within and around Redmond would support the community's objectives? What improvements in streets and intersections would benefit Metro operations and how could these be funded and implemented? The current comprehensive plan transportation element identifies and maps "areas to be served by circulator service." If the City does want such service, how can this be achieved (planned, funded, operated)?

4. *Metro transit centers, park and rides.* What transit center and park and ride locations best suit the City's objectives? Are the current transit centers (especially Downtown and Bear Creek) in the right place? Are additional locations needed? As King County Metro continues to pursue transit-oriented development (TOD)opportunities, what is Redmond's position on a potential TOD in Downtown? On other investments?

5. *State Route 520 – terminus.* What is the long term future of SR 520? Given that advocacy for extending this freeway will ultimately emerge from Washington DOT traffic forecasts, what is the City's position? Should SR 520 always terminate where it does today (at Redmond/Fall City Road)? Would it be in the City's interests to see it extended east or northeast? Would it be in the City's interests to try to prevent extension? If extension is ultimately to become a topic of planning, are there steps the City should be taking now to reduce future impacts and costs?

6. *State Route 520 – HOV extension*. Should HOV lanes be extended to the Redmond/Fall City Road interchange? Are HOV lanes needed in both directions? What are the implications of HOV alternatives for interchange layout and design? Would HOV lane extension create opportunities for a new park and ride location?

7. *Willows Road corridor*. As areas north of Redmond continue to grow (Woodinville, etc.), what is the City's position on the future of Willows Road? Should the City participate in studies to increase traffic capacity in this corridor? Should the City advocate or oppose such projects?

Question for Discussion (2)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to strengthen the City's regional posture by adopting specific local positions and preferences on important regional policy choices?

THEME: THROUGH TRAFFIC

Issue or Opportunity

Many "edge cities" experience the dilemma presented by traffic that passes through the community from outlying areas to other parts of the region. On one hand, this traffic represents customers for retailers and restaurants. On the other hand, many commuters pass through without spending money. The dilemma is especially difficult where roadway capacity issues must be resolved.

Is it the community's "responsibility" to serve as a conduit for non-local trips? If accommodating this traffic offers no direct benefit to the community, why allow or encourage transportation investments that may actually be detrimental to community character? Or is the prospect of high levels of congestion a worse evil?

Current Conditions

This is clearly an important issue for Redmond. As areas to the east and northeast build out, Redmond will lie in the path of trips connecting these areas to employment centers and other destinations to the west and southwest.

Although Redmond is situated along the eastern edge of the metropolitan area's Urban Growth Boundary, substantial residential and commercial development will continue on lands east of the City. It will be important to understand the extent to which Redmond's streets may be called upon in the future to carry traffic that is regional in nature (no local origins or destinations).

Consternation about pass-through traffic was a key issue identified during the Downtown transportation planning process and was also an issue raised by many citizens participating in Redmond Design Day.

While some work has gone into how much traffic is "local" and how much is "through," there is a need to study and clarify this further, corridor by corridor, and by time of day.

Logical, consistent definitions of "pass-through traffic" should be developed. There has been a tendency to think of pass-through traffic as being primarily an east-west issue affecting Redmond Way and Cleveland Street. Is this accurate?

Policy Direction
This theme is most relevant in the context of transportation investment programming and prioritization, and in the context of regional planning and coordination. The City should be prepared to make good decisions about its own transportation investments, and also to influence and leverage regional and state decisions. The City's decisions will also affect private sector investment in Redmond.

What are the City's objectives?

- To move pass-through traffic off of core area commercial streets and onto alternative parallel routes (Bear Creek Parkway and State Route 520)?
- To preserve business derived from pass-through traffic?
- To improve business accessibility and circulation in the Downtown?
- To avoid loss of community character to the combined effects of street expansion and traffic growth?
- To match increases in traffic with increases in roadway capacity (maintain level of service)?
- To reduce east-west pass-through traffic? North-south or diagonal pass-through traffic? In-commutes and out-commutes?

If the answer is "all of the above" the City faces a tough challenge. Each of these objectives competes with the others and all cannot be achieved simultaneously in equal measure. Tradeoffs are required and the City will have to strike a preferred balance.

While some of these questions cannot be answered without the more detailed traffic analysis and forecasting to be completed in the second phase of the Transportation Master Plan(in 2004), the City should set some policy guidance this year in the framework policies of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Careful analysis is needed to support development of policy direction on pass-through traffic. The City will require better information about:

1. What qualifies as "pass-through" traffic? Much of the traffic identified in the Downtown plan as pass-through actually has one trip end somewhere in Redmond. This is pass-through from the perspective of Downtown, but not from the perspective of the City. Given that it is important that Downtown Redmond be well-connected to its own neighborhoods and to other local commercial destinations, the City should define pass-through traffic as trips with both ends outside Redmond.

2. What are the unintended consequences of traffic redistribution resulting from decisions made about pass-through traffic? If there are "choke points" elsewhere in the arterial network, would rerouting and accelerating pass-through traffic around the Downtown just cause it to stack up in long queues elsewhere? (An example might be Redmond Way/NE 85th Street approaching I-405 west of Downtown where long queues already occur in the PM peak hour.)

Question for Discussion (3)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect local policies or strategies for managing and responding to through traffic?

THEME: ACTIVE LIVING BY DESIGN

Issue or Opportunity
This theme covers a variety of important and interrelated issues concerned with the environment for walking and bicycling. The phrase "active living by design" is intended to promote a deeper understanding of the effects that ongoing development patterns and urban design in Redmond have on the ability of residents and workers to feel comfortable walking or bicycling (engage in "active living").

The phrase also connects this issue in Redmond with a national trend toward better understanding the significant effects that difficult, unsafe walking and biking environments have on community and personal health and well-being.

Current Conditions
The effort to develop high quality walking/biking facilities in Redmond can run up against the perception that such things are "amenities" to be provided only where they don't interfere with more essential functions, such as traffic capacity.

Technical traffic engineering textbooks refer to pedestrians as "impediments" to traffic circulation. When tradeoffs are made between traffic accommodation and non-motorized travel, they may be resolved in favor of traffic because this is seen as the more important function of streets and urban places.

However, research shows that urban design – the design and layout of our infrastructure and our built places – directly and significantly affects our ability to walk and bike, and our willingness to travel by means other than personal vehicle. This, in turn, directly and significantly affects the personal physical health and well-being of Redmond's residents.

For example, research by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation shows that the health of our children is particularly at risk, as inactivity due to auto-oriented urban design is leading directly to an epidemic of obesity and Type II diabetes (previously rare in children), as well as physical and learning disabilities.

At the same time, people consistently indicate in surveys that being able to walk in their communities for short trips is an important feature that they associate with high "quality of life." They desire this feature and will pay

higher prices for homes in neighborhoods and communities that provide it (according to the Urban Land Institute). The bottom line is that active living is a fundamental and important value that may outweigh other design considerations in urban development and transportation infrastructure.

Policy Direction
Policies in support of this theme for Redmond should support "active living by design" by ensuring neighborhoods and commercial areas are fully functional for walking, bicycling and other non-motorized means of travel.

This could include:

- Making a broad policy statement that walking and bicycling are essential functions of the City, rather than optional amenities;
- Guiding private development (development review);
- Guiding design of public infrastructure (especially streets);
- Ensuring sidewalk continuity in commercial areas;
- Developing uniform bicycle and pedestrian design standards, including crosswalks;
- Ensuring safe routes to school; and,
- Prioritizing walk/bike facilities within the transportation investments program.

Question for Discussion (4)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect an emphasis on "active living by design" by ensuring neighborhoods and commercial areas are fully functional for walking, bicycling and other non-motorized means of travel?

THEME: NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC PROTECTION

Issue or Opportunity
City public works departments often receive requests from residents interested in neighborhood traffic protection (NTP) – "taming" or "calming" local residential and collector streets where traffic is perceived as moving too fast, or where traffic levels are too high.

As Redmond has recognized, it is not a good idea to respond to such requests on an ad hoc, case-by-case basis, as this can expose and amplify the underlying challenges associated with traffic mitigation measures:

- Budgets are limited and NTP projects can be expensive, giving rise to conflicts over priorities and funding levels;
- Neighbors might appreciate the "improvements" but commuters, along with emergency service responders, might not feel they are improvements at all if they slow travel and response times;
- Traffic diverted from one street finds another way – often someone else's street, leading to unintended consequences; and,
- In the future, some of the demand for "traffic calming" measures will be directed toward collector and arterial streets, where tradeoffs with traffic capacity and emergency service response must be considered.

There is a need for a consistent, systematic approach to NTP projects that is based in broader community policies about travel and transportation investment.

This can affect both existing streets where NTP projects might be proposed and new subdivision streets where NTC measures might be built in from the start.

Current Conditions
Redmond's current Comprehensive Plan transportation element addresses neighborhood traffic protection, and the City has an ongoing, funded program of NTP projects.

Two current questions to be addressed are:
- Is the City's program funding and approach adequate?
- Does the City have the right toolkit for the kinds of design issues it will face in the future?

Redmond's streets have been laid out in a suburban orientation – a dendritic (tree-like) network with most traffic concentrated on a small number of collector and arterial streets. This may in the future create pressure to consider traffic calming projects on collector and arterial streets, where NTP designs may be less appropriate.

Policy Direction
This subject continues to be important to the public, and was a topic of some discussion at Redmond Design Day. The City has an ongoing, funded program that appears to address many of the key issues.

Areas where further policy development may be appropriate include:

- Traffic management on commercial arterial and collector streets, including especially the downtown street grid. If traffic calming projects are to be implemented on collector or even arterial streets, is there a need for a consistent, warrants-based program addressing funding priority, emergency response times and traffic diversion issues?

- Adequacy of funding, given anticipated program demand.

Question for Discussion (5)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to refine the policy direction for neighborhood traffic protection and traffic calming on Redmond streets?

THEME: GRIDDED, CONNECTED STREET NETWORKS

Issue or Opportunity
Well-connected street networks (with a high number of connections per mile and a fully developed network of local, collector and arterial streets) are much more efficient at carrying traffic than the incomplete, suburban cul-de-sac street systems developed since the 1950s (often referred to as "loops and lollipops").

Because of the lack of connectivity and the concentration of traffic on a small number of major roads, suburban street systems increase household VMT (vehicle miles of travel) by as much as 50%, and create unintended congestion.

Even pedestrian connections between neighborhoods are often missing in typical suburban development. At the same time, cul-de-sac street systems have features preferred by many residents, including lower traffic volumes and slower vehicle speeds.

Current Conditions
Redmond's street network is characterized by a low level of connectivity, indirect routing, and missing links throughout the local, collector and arterial street network. Some of this problem may be potentially resolvable (for example, the downtown grid could be improved through purchase of the railroad corridor).

Proposals to build missing local street connections in established neighborhoods are unlikely to garner public support. However, certain missing links in the collector and arterial network should be studied, especially those that affect access and circulation in Downtown Redmond.

In other areas, the problem may be so deeply entrenched as to defy solution. However, there are some developing areas of Redmond where good street grids could be achieved as part of initial development.

Policy Direction
As major redevelopment opportunities emerge, the City should be prepared to address improved vehicle and pedestrian connectivity as part of those approvals.

Standards for connectivity in developing areas and subdivisions could also be drafted.

As the City moves forward with acquisition of the BNSF rail corridor through Downtown, there will be an opportunity to make north-south connections that are currently missing. Because these may be controversial, the City should incorporate some policy statements in its Comprehensive Plan setting the stage for a policy-driven approach to this issue.

In residential areas, where good street connections may prove controversial, the City should pursue a policy of requiring pedestrian links between adjacent neighborhoods (e.g., through the end of cul-de-sacs), and between neighborhoods and nearby commercial areas.

Question for Discussion (6)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect greater emphasis on a highly-connected, gridded street network?

THEME: COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSIT

Issue or Opportunity

This theme addresses the ways that Redmond's transit services could be designed to serve different needs and functions. Large urban transit systems (e.g., King County Metro and Sound Transit) often are developed with the primary function of providing trunk service in and out of the central regional downtown. Connecting other major activity centers in the region becomes a secondary function. Providing internal circulation for specific communities within the region or supporting the particular objectives of those communities is an even lower priority and will ordinarily be accomplished only so far as that is achievable as part of the primary regional trunk service design.

"Community-based transit" is a phrase that describes transit services designed to provide internal circulation within communities and to meet specific community objectives.

This may imply differences in vehicles (smaller, human-scaled, attractive), in service levels (frequent headways), and in route design (connecting internal origins and destinations). It may also relate to characteristics of regional service that are important locally.

It is important to recognize that, in many cases, community-based transit services require larger operating budgets because of increased frequency or other service improvements. Also, while smaller transit vehicles offer many benefits in community-oriented service, they are not necessarily less expensive to operate (per mile) than large urban buses.

Metro and Sound Transit will pursue regional transportation objectives, while working to be as responsive as possible to the needs and desires of specific communities. Individual cities (including Redmond) in this environment must either become effective at leveraging the regional agencies to meet their needs, or find some other way to further their local objectives.

Current Conditions

The primary transit issues emerging from Redmond Design Day and from past transit planning work appear are:

- The desire for internal circulation (transit connecting internal origins and destinations in Redmond) such as a "downtown shuttle;" and,
- The need for better travel times on local and regional routes, especially trunk connections to Seattle, or between Downtown Redmond and Overlake, and/or Downtown Bellevue.

There is widespread agreement that local and regional routes are too circuitous and slow to be competitive with auto travel for many people. However, this should be examined route-by-route. However, while there is a shared perception that auto travel is much faster than regional bus routes, this may not be the case for many trip pairs – a fact that could be better communicated to the public.

Also, while there is interest in "shuttles," this concept means different things to different people and no single idea seems to have risen to the top as a consensus or priority. In this context, the potential role of dial a ride services – perhaps as route development projects – should be considered.

Policy Direction
A range of policies could emerge from this theme, including:

- Priorities for regional transit service improvements;
- Improvements in local transit access infrastructure (bus stops, sidewalks);
- Other improvements in intermodal connectivity;
- Transit centers or TOD (transit-oriented design) sites;
- Additional or extended high-occupancy vehicle lanes;
- Investments in street infrastructure to improve transit efficiency;
- Investments in local shuttles or circulators;
- Increased emphasis on demand management programs (discount and special passes, etc.).

Question for Discussion (7)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect greater emphasis on community-based transit?

THEME: MULTIMODAL STREETS

Issue or Opportunity
Streets represent the principal infrastructure for all modes of travel in Redmond. Public transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, personal motor vehicles – all these modes rely on the City's road and street corridors for most of their routing and infrastructure. However, many of Redmond's streets have been designed primarily for use by motor vehicles – cars and trucks. Where this is the case, it will be difficult to impossible to achieve functional, efficient networks for these other modes of travel.

The concept of multimodal streets describes a more balanced approach to street design. Multimodal streets:

- Allocate street space among modes with the objective of ensuring functionality of all modes, rather than assigning all or most of the right of way to vehicular capacity;
- Balance allocation of signal timing based on corridor-specific mode share objectives (such as providing more than the minimum crossing time for pedestrians, or eliminating a right turn arrow to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians);
- Ensure safety for all modes (by acknowledging the right of each mode to be present in the corridor, and then making the necessary provisions to ensure their safety, even if that comes at the expense of marginal reductions in vehicular capacity);
- Incorporate signing that is designed for use by pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as motorists; and,
- Provide multiple nodes for connections between modes (e.g., bike to bus or bus to pedestrian).

On arterial streets (including freeways), multimodal functionality is limited to such features as high-occupancy vehicle lanes and lateral access to transit centers by other modes (walking, bicycling, driving/parking and local bus).

Generally, cities have designated specific street corridors as multimodal streets that accommodate all modes. The resulting network of multimodal streets is less than the entire street system, recognizing limitations in funding for retrofit projects.

Often the multimodal designation can be worked into the local functional classification system, or into a local system of street typologies and associated street design standards.

Current Conditions
Many of Redmond's streets display low functionality for public transit, walking and bicycling. This is most critical for the City's collector streets, which ultimately are necessary to achieving modal balance. Another issue (or opportunity) in Redmond will be the potential for extension of arterial HOV lanes – especially along State Route 520.

Policy Direction
Some previous work has been done by Redmond staff on relationships between street character and adjoining land use, which may be usable as a foundation for looking into a multimodal street network for the City. The primary implications would be for transportation project programming and prioritization, and for street design standards.

Three specific policy directions the City should consider are:

- Designating multimodal street corridors, perhaps as an aspect of functional classification;
- Developing multimodal level of service standards, with component standards for each mode (walk, bicycle, transit, motor vehicle) – either for use in multimodal corridors, or for use city-wide with different standards in multimodal corridors; and,
- Developing an entirely new approach to street network planning and management that does not rely on traditional motor vehicle "level of service" standards(traffic volume/ traffic capacity), but instead emphasizes multimodal functionality.

Question for Discussion (8)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect greater emphasis on multimodal streets?

THEME: LAND USE INTERFACE

Issue or Opportunity
The City's transportation program should be strategically deployed in support of land use and community form objectives. For example, such objectives as housing diversity, employment diversity, mixed used development patterns, or downtown rejuvenation could be supported (or thwarted) by transportation decision making.

Over the past two decades, cities have begun to make transportation decisions based on community development objectives, rather than purely on the basis of capacity needs. One example might be rebuilding or reconfiguring downtown streets in support of downtown redevelopment. Another example is the decision to expand transit service in an area where mixed use, higher density development and redevelopment is desired.

Current Conditions
Some amount of mixed use development is beginning to take place in Redmond, especially in the areas north and northwest of the Downtown core. While the Overlake center is seen as a potential location for mixed land uses, this area faces significant challenges due to heavy traffic flows and a harsh pedestrian environment. The development of hotels in Redmond Town Center, within Downtown, is potentially a positive development, especially if pedestrian and traffic connectivity issues can be addressed.

Policy Direction
The most practical approach for Redmond will be to address policy direction at the neighborhood level. Three neighborhoods warrant particular attention:

1. *Downtown*. What is the right approach to the Downtown street network? The Downtown Transportation Plan recommends a number of specific strategies. These will be reviewed and confirmed (or revised) as part of the Transportation Master Plan. However, policy direction reflective of a coherent Downtown vision should be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan Update now to guide this work.

2. *Overlake*. If Overlake is to become a place where residential development occurs in conjunction with commercial redevelopment to create a diverse, mixed use urban place, the pedestrian system and walk environment must be dramatically improved. Current proposals to build major new interchanges, overpasses and other high capacity highway projects should be tested in light of the City's land use objectives.

3. *Southeast Redmond*. As this area transitions and evolves, the kind of street network and the kind of walk/bike system developed there will be major influences on what kinds of development the market allows to occur. Also, investments in the State Route 520 corridor (such as potential route extension, HOV lane extension, interchange reconstruction, and park and ride location) will affect the character of this area. As the vision for Southeast Redmond solidifies, specific transportation strategies should be identified to support achievement of the vision.

Question for Discussion (9)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect greater emphasis on achieving land use objectives, including those unique to specific neighborhoods?

THEME: REAL MOBILITY CHOICES

Issue or Opportunity

This issue has been important in Redmond for some time, and emerged as a theme at Redmond Design Day. Participants articulated the idea that there is significant inherent value in the availability of more than one way (mode) to make a given trip. In some cases this might benefit family finances by avoiding the need to own a second or third vehicle, or might enrich daily life by allowing someone to walk to a nearby commercial area.

However, for mode choices to be "real" they must meet basic travel requirements. For example, while travel to another part of the region may be feasible by transit, it may not be practical because of current transit service involves a circuitous route and long travel time.

Similarly, while walking may be "possible" in certain areas of the city, it may feel uncomfortable or unsafe and thus not be a practical choice.

Citizens expressed frustration that the physical environment and public infrastructure in Redmond prevented "real mobility choices."

Current Conditions

As implied in the title, Redmond's residents appear to feel that mobility choices are not "real" in Redmond. Design day participants described driving as the "only real choice" for most trips.

To some degree, this perception may reflect the fact that, while the City is actively involved in transportation demand management programs (which help people become aware of, and take advantage of, choices) these tend to be employee-based rather than resident-based

In Redmond, new commercial development is routinely conditioned by transportation management programs. The City also offers programs, services and financial support to employers. A private employer-based member organization, the Greater Redmond Transportation Management Associate, is influential in identifying employer needs and desires to enhance multimodal choices. Currently, however, there are no programs aimed toward individual residents, families or residential neighborhoods.

Policy Direction
There are a number of potential policy directions Redmond could pursue to improve mobility choices for its residents:

1. Recognizing that achieving a greater range of mobility choices is a different topic than the "mode share" policies in the current comprehensive plan. By adding a different approach to mobility measurement – perhaps something along the lines of a feasibility or compatibility index – the City could refocus its programs and policies.

2. Another approach that has become more common for cities wishing to address this issue is the development of multimodal level of service (LOS) standards. Redmond's current Comprehensive Plan sets LOS standards for motor vehicle traffic and also for transit. However, the transit LOS standards are based only on proximity to transit routes with half hour service during peak hour. No service standards have been set for bicycle and pedestrian modes. Multimodal LOS standards allow the City to "dial in" the desired balance among modes by district, reflecting different priorities and different land use strategies in different areas of Redmond.

3. Both of the above two policy directions could be utilized to guide transportation program funding priorities and land use/zoning policies and decisions. To some degree, the mobility choice issue can be seen as a simple need to provide improved infrastructure and services for the "alternative modes" – walking, bicycling and transit.

The concept of real mobility choices might reach new audiences in Redmond, helping build enthusiasm for new directions in the City's transportation programs.

Question for Discussion (10)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect greater emphasis on providing real mobility choices for residents and workers?

THEME: MOTOR FREIGHT ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Issue or Opportunity

Like all cities, Redmond relies on good motor freight access and circulation. This essential aspect of the functioning of a modern city includes a wide array of services, from home and office parcel shipping services, to the delivery services upon which retail and restaurant enterprises rely, to commodity and bulk freight haulers. Redmond is somewhat unique in that it still retains some extraction industry within its boundaries, along with light and medium manufacturing, and a distribution center for a parcel shipping service.

Inattention to motor freight access and circulation needs can manifest itself in negative impacts on an unsuspecting populace. Potential impacts include:

- Higher consumer prices on certain items (e.g., motor fuel, groceries);
- Reduced feasibility for retail or restaurant businesses (e.g., where alleys are missing and deliveries are difficult or impossible);
- Slower delivery schedules for parcel shipping services (common in Western cities); and,
- Lost employment or reduced diversity of economic opportunity.

Maintaining a good system of access and circulation for motor freight in Redmond could be a key supportive strategy for preserving economic diversity, and for encouraging redevelopment and mixed land uses.

Current Conditions

Redmond retains some advantages for good motor freight circulation. For example, it is located along the final miles of a major regional freeway (SR 520), and is reasonably close to another (I-405), making it at least somewhat attractive as a location for warehousing and distribution services.

However, discontinuities in the local collector and arterial network represent a challenge to efficient motor freight service within the City. This affects costs and viability of retail, office and restaurant enterprises, especially in Downtown. Motor freight operators also are affected by the evolution of land uses in and around Redmond, which result in roadway environments where trucks must mix with residential traffic, bicyclists and pedestrians.

From one perspective, this can be seen as a problem for freight operations, where the transportation system is less functional for trucks because of the introduction of non-industrial land uses. From another perspective, it can be seen as a problem for neighborhoods uncomfortable with truck traffic and commercial freight operations on local streets.

This is particularly true in Southeast Redmond, where residential development to the south and east of the industrial area are affecting freight operations, which formerly took place in a semi-rural setting. Also, traffic from developing areas outside Redmond is affecting the functionality of major streets in this area.

Policy Direction
The current Comprehensive Plan includes only one transportation policy on this subject, focusing instead on mobility (people movement). The City should add a section articulating the importance of motor freight.

Specific policy directions should include:

1. Street connectivity (see previous section on this theme);

2. Preserving alleys in older commercial areas; and,

3. Ensuring good delivery access in new development and redevelopment.

A primary barrier to policy development in this area is the lack of information about motor freight conditions. Redmond should undertake (perhaps with regional assistance) an assessment of motor freight issues and needs.

Question for Discussion (11)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect greater emphasis on motor freight access and circulation?

THEME: CONTINUED PROGRESS ON DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS

Issue or Opportunity
Redmond made significant progress during 2001 and 2002 on a transportation program for Downtown. Because Downtown functions as the core of the city, and is situated at major crossroads in the regional arterial highway network, it was useful to begin work on the Transportation Master Plan with a Downtown program. Key features of the preliminary plan for Downtown circulation are listed in the box below.

Current Conditions
Several of the primary proposals contained in the Downtown plan remain undecided. These include:

- The proposed extension of Bear Creek Parkway to the west;
- The conversion of the one-way couplet (Redmond Way and Cleveland Street) to two-way operation;
- The conversion of several multilane streets to three lanes; and,
- The location and function of the downtown transit center.

While there is general agreement that the issue of "pass-through" traffic is important, there is little consensus about the best approach. There also appears to be widespread community support for the notion that Downtown should be a "pedestrian friendly" place.

However, again, support is less evident for the specific actions required to achieve that objective. Overall, it is clear more work will be needed to demonstrate the appropriateness of the traffic circulation measures contained in the Plan.

Downtown Transportation Plan Features ("Concept B")*

Circulation
- SR 520 and Bear Creek Parkway improvements for pass-through traffic
- *Downtown streets all two-lane/two-way*
- Connect northwest north-south streets intersection the BNSF right-of-way

Open Space
- *A "Central Park" at the existing Park-and-Ride lot*
- Use of BNSF as a major open space and pedestrian connection

BNSF Corridor
- Acquisition of the right-of-way for public use
- Open space and trails
- Potential use for transit vehicles

Transit
- *A transit "spine" (most buses would run on this street)*
- *Expansion of the Park-and-Ride lot east of downtown*

Parking
- Increased on-street parking
- Additional parking facilities with ground-floor retail uses

* Note: Concept B is not fully adopted. Items in italics in particular are subject to continuing review.

Policy Direction
While consensus on specific strategies has been elusive, there is no question about the importance of Downtown or the urgency of addressing transportation issues affecting the Downtown.

The Comprehensive Plan Update offers an opportunity to capture some of the essential ideas in the Downtown Transportation Plan in framework policies.

Question for Discussion (12)

Should the Transportation Element framework policies be updated or revised to reflect greater emphasis on continued progress on downtown improvements?

POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY DIRECTIONS

The twelve transportation policy themes provide a broad, but targeted, basis for updating the "Framework Policies" contained in the transportation element of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan. Some of these issues and opportunities are already addressed in the current Plan. However, to some extent they also represent newly emerging trends in travel patterns, in public expectations, and in transportation planning knowledge.

The transportation element will also be revised to ensure consistency with other elements of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

The table on the next page summarizes proposed changes to be made in the Update process.

SUMMARY: PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES

CURRENT POLICY SECTION	NEW TRANSPORTATION POLICY DIRECTIONS
A. Framework	Add policy statements addressing community character, pass-through traffic, active living by design, mobility choice, and motor freight.
B. Travel Demand Forecasting	Update 20-year growth forecasts.
C. Transportation and Land Use	Add new policy statements to capture the City's objectives for increased diversity of housing and economic opportunity, and for transportation measures to support mixed use development patterns.
D. District Management	Articulate community character objectives that vary by district, and identify key transportation strategies to support these objectives.
E. Service Standards and Concurrency	This section should be rewritten to de-emphasize its supply-side approach and allow recognition of community character objectives by broadening the standards to include all modes, emphasizing "real mobility choices." The mode share objectives warrant review and confirmation.
F. Transportation Facility Plan	Lengthen the planning horizon to 30 years. Revise concurrency language to coincide with changes to E. Make the multimodal strategy more explicit.
G. Transportation Finance Plan	Revise based on emerging needs and new Comprehensive Plan policies.
H. Regional Public Transportation	This section is much too general and vague today. It should address opportunities associated with the implementation of Sound Transit and other high capacity systems in order to set the stage for Redmond's participation in regional decision making.
I. Local Public Transportation	More explicit objectives are needed on these subjects: ➢ Priorities for regional transit service improvements; ➢ Improvements in local transit access (bus stops, sidewalks); ➢ Other improvements in intermodal connectivity; ➢ Transit centers or TOD (transit-oriented design) sites; ➢ Additional or extended high-occupancy vehicle lanes; ➢ Investments in street infrastructure to improve transit efficiency; ➢ Investments in local shuttles or circulators; ➢ Increased emphasis on demand management programs (discount and special passes, etc.).
J. Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation	This section is detailed and progressive. However, it lacks any mention of safe routes to school.
K. Transportation Demand Management	Updating and refining.
L. Parking Management	Updating and refining.
M. Circulation System Management	This section should be rewritten to reflect policy development on pass-through traffic, Downtown circulation, multimodal streets, a more connected street network, and motor freight circulation and access needs.
N. Air Quality	No major changes.
O. Neighborhood Protection	Updating and refining.
P. Regional Coordination	Adopting policies addressing City preferences and priorities concerning: ➢ Sound Transit Phase I; ➢ Sound Transit Phase II; ➢ King County Metro Transit route structure and service levels; ➢ Metro transit centers, park and rides; ➢ State Route 520 – terminus; ➢ State Route 520 – HOV extension; ➢ Willows Road corridor.